

Mr. Larry Strawderman  
Information and Privacy Coordinator  
CIA  
Washington, D.C. 20505

8/19/84

Dear Mr. Strawderman,

As you know from the personal review of which you have written me, you know that I have FOIA/PA requests and appeals going back to 1971 that the CIA has not acted on, particularly requests relating to the assassination of President beginning in 1975. The CIA asked for more time. Much time passed and I wrote to inquire about the status of these requests. You told me that your regulations prohibited response to this simple inquiry, I asked for and in time received a copy of those alleged prohibitions by regulation. I found that, in plain English, you lied. So I asked you to specify the provision of regulations you invoked. Under date of July 9, 1984 you merely repeated what I regard as a blatant lie, "we remain blocked by Agency regulations." It is obvious that if the regulations of which you provided a copy contain this alleged "block" or can even be tortured into such an interpretation you would have cited any such provision.

Having been caught in so gross and deliberate a lie, on July 9 you shifted to a new excuse for not responding, saying "I am doubtful that we can provide meaningful status information." Your reason? The alleged destruction, again under alleged CIA regulations, of "our FOIA files on requests that have been dormant (sic)" for as little as a year. I requested a copy of those regulations and, not surprisingly, you have not provided them. Or responded in any way.

In yesterday's mail, from a friend aware of my interests, I received copies of some of the statements made to the House committee in your campaign to ~~get~~ get what I believe will be contorted into virtual total exemption of FOIA and probably PA. Among these statements is that of your executive director, Charles A. Briggs. Now it happens that he attested to the CIA's backlog, saying a requester "can now anticipate waiting two to three years to receive a response."

Is there nothing at all you people cannot be truthful about, singular and plural intended?

How can you possibly have regulations that require destruction of ignored requests in a single year when you claim a backlog of as much as three years?

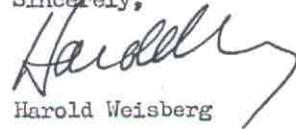
Based on prior personal experience, and my experience with Mr. Briggs' sworn statements is adequate enough, I do not have the problem of deciding which of you was not truthful. Both of you were not truthful.

This appears to be traditional for the CIA. I remember quite clearly Director Helms' assurances to the newspaper editors or publishers association, "Trust us, we do not target on Americans." And I remember quite well the extreme difficulty I had in obtaining a copy of his printed and published statement from the CIA. Which then carried its spooking into mailing in a plain envelope without return address!

I suppose I know the answer but nonetheless ask the obvious question, have you people no shame at all?

And I ask again for the alleged regulations that require the destruction of FOIA requests you have managed to ignore for as little as a year.

Sincerely,

  
Harold Weisberg

cc: Mark Lynch